

Town of Mansfield
Special Town Meeting
July 12, 2010
Mansfield Middle School Auditorium

Town Clerk Mary Stanton called the Special Town Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Mansfield Middle School and read the notice of the meeting as published and posted. She then called for the election of a Moderator. Mayor Paterson moved to nominate Bruce Clouette as Moderator. The nomination was seconded and the motion to approve the nomination passed unanimously. A motion was made and seconded to adopt Roberts Rules of Order for the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Clouette outlined the rules of debate for the meeting asking the public to limit their initial comments to five minutes.

Mr. Clouette dismissed the point of order raised by Ms. Tanaka as it was not consistent with Roberts Rules of Order.

Mr. Clouette recognized Town Planner Gregory Padick to present an overview of the ordinance.

Mr. Padick highlighted the basic structure of the ordinance. Specifically, emphasizing the applicability section of the ordinance; the parking space site plan requirements and modifications to the site plan requirements.

David Morse moved to sustain the action of the Council regarding the ordinance, the motion was seconded.

David Morse, Birchwood Heights, spoke in favor of the ordinance. He feels although, the ordinance is not perfect it does succeed in making good neighbors and strong neighborhoods.

Cynara Stites, Hanks Hill Road, plans on voting to sustain the ordinance but would like to see the Council amend the ordinance by defining landlord and by dropping the requirement that restricts vehicles from backing out of driveways onto adjacent streets.

David Haseltine, 209 Birch Road, feels this ordinance is an unnecessary government intrusion on the rights of private property owners and questions the timing for the town meeting, seeing that UConn students are away and not able to exercise their right to vote. He would like to see this ordinance nullified.

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, asked for clarification on the definition of a rental. Mr. Padick's understanding is that the ordinance is silent on this issue, but there is a provision for an owner/occupancy exemption. In order to be exempt the owner must live in the dwelling for 6 months in a calendar year. She feels the ordinance is not clear and should not be sustained.

Frauke Steahr, 18 Farmstead Road, thinks that vehicles backing onto roads are more of a safety issue. He feels the ordinance is well crafted and thereby, very comfortable endorsing it.

Therese John, 835 Stafford Road, questioned whether children of rental owners qualified as having an owner/occupancy exemption. Mr. Padick explained the exemption would only apply to record owners having a minimum 50% fee simple interest. She would like to see offenders addressed.

Christopher Masterjohn, 65 Northwood Road, is glad to hear that parking issues are being addressed. He expressed his concern that landlords are being targeted as operating businesses. He feels two dangerous precedents within the ordinance are being set; 1) violating the basic concept of property and 2) enforcing an ordinance on various specific groups of people without applying it to everyone.

Paul Stearn, a resident of the Town of Ashford, owning rental property on Storrs Road, is concerned that this ordinance is not fair to everyone.

Dori Smith, Atwoodville Road, feels the ordinance is fair.

Matvey Soklvsy, Storrs Road expressed his concerns on the fewer number of people that are leaving the town resulting in more traffic congestion.

Joan Hall, Birchwood Heights, does not think this is an issue about private property, but more about regulating commerce.

Peter Kochenburger, Storrs Heights Road, feels this ordinance is more about economic regulation, requiring those in business of renting property to provide parking for their tenants.

Nancy Cox, called the question. The motion was seconded and passed by a show of hands by more than a 2/3rds vote.

The motion was sustained by a show of hands. With 326 persons voting, the motion passed with 218 in favor and 108 opposed.

A motion to adjourn the Town Meeting was made, seconded and passed by all at 7:00 p.m.

Christine Hawthorne, Asst. Town Clerk